**Table Talk**

**Sermon Series: Relationship Status – Complicated**

**February 23, 2020**

**Introduction (12 min)**

Welcome everyone to your Table Talk small group. Watch the video and share the story below, then open up the discussion with the questions provided.

**Table Talk Video: Relationship Status – Complicated**

I am so thankful that God has blessed me with healthy relationships. I mean, none of them get complicated at all. Ever.

Like when I was pastoring a small church and hired a part time associate pastor. He needed bivocational employment but was having trouble finding a second job, so I also hired him to work in the small business I co-owned with another pastor in town. Being his boss on the job site, my best friend in town also being his boss, me be his boss at church, and his friend, and offering mentoring to him and his wife – yeah, that never got complicated!

When I was in college a good friend studying for the ministry started falling away from the Lord. He began using foul language, made inappropriate jokes, and was rude to others on campus. He was also dating a good friend of mine, in several of my classes, and volunteering at a local church where several of my other friends attended. That certainly never got complicated!

I met Ashley just a few months before graduating from Mount Vernon Nazarene University. We were in a J-term one act play together, started dating in the spring, and then I moved half way across the country in the summer to attend seminary. While trying to figure out how to make our long distance relationship work, I worked full time, interned at a church, served in a parachurch ministry, and was a full time student. I finally (in her words) proposed, and we had to plan a wedding while she wasn’t even I the country! She completed a fall semester in Costa Rica and a J-term in China. That certainly never got complicated either!

This relationship thing is a breeze, right? Wrong. Complicated happens. It happens in every single relationship. But complicated doesn’t have to be bad. It is simply a part of God’s journey to develop us and our relationships into something that can reflect His glory and character to the world around us. Once you get through it, complicated can even be fun to look back on.

Complicated happens. Enjoy the ride!

- Pastor Reggie Phillips

**Prayer (3 minutes)**

Quiet your hearts before God and allow him to point out the complicated in your relationships. Now take a few moments in prayer to give thanks. I know giving thanks for complicated relationships may not come naturally, but begin by thanking God for the people involved, then for the messes that he has seen you through, and then for the complicated situations right now that are giving you a chance to grow.

**Starting the Discussion (4 minutes)**

1. What stood out to you from the sermon this week as Pastor Sharon was preaching? How did God speak to you through it?
2. What is the most complicated relationship you are working through right now?

**Unfolding the Biblical Story (25 minutes)**

**Read 1 Corinthians 7:17**

1. What if the relationship you are in is complicated? Is this advice null and void?
2. How does this simple instruction start to make the complicated simple? What does it do to change our thinking and focus?

**Read Philippians 1:6**

1. Does it change the way you view relationships if you understand that the same God that loves the person you are in conflict with also loves you?
2. How does this verse give us hope that complicated will only be temporary?

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

1. How might love like this make complicated relationships less complicated?
2. At what point does this passage say it is ok to give up on showing love or maintaining a relationship because it is complicated? What should we do in the face of complicated relationships?

**Read John 17:20-23**

1. What should always be more important than the complicating factors we face in relationships?
2. In His love, Jesus has prayed for you and your relationships! What reasons for confidence are we given in this passage that God will work redemptively through our relationships, even the complicated ones?

**Making Scripture Personal (10 minutes)**

1. Relationships are complicated, but God wants to work redemptively through them. What relationship has God directed you to be open to Him working on this week?
2. What needs to change in your attitudes or responses to those around you to allow them to see God at work in you?
3. Are you the cause of the complicated in any of your relationships? What do you need to do to resolve that tension in a God honoring way?

**Prayer (3 minutes)**

Loving God, you desire to draw all of us into a closer relationship with you, and we are keenly aware that the enemy tries to make our human relationships complicated to distract us from that. Help us to focus on you, to trust your leadership, and to seek peace and unity in our relationships with others. May you be glorified through our journey as we deal with the complicated and love without limits. Jesus’ name, amen.

**Wrapping Up (2 minutes)**

See if anyone has lingering questions or insights to share from your time of study and prayer. Summarize the group discussion as a reminder of what you learned together.

**Scripture Challenge (3 minutes)**

For your scripture challenge this week, work with your group to try and memorize Philippians 1:6. Practice it out loud together, write it down, and then display it in a prominent place. May you be encouraged that God will indeed finish what he started, and no amount of complicated can get in the way of that!